

after birth, he had attributed the condition of the limbs to an excess of the tonic contraction of the muscles natural to the fetus *in utero*, and which gradually disappeared under the influence of volition and the use of the limbs. He thought dentition the great source of paraplegia and hemiplegia in young children. The irritation of teething sometimes caused paralysis by exciting convulsions, during which the nervous centres were damaged. At other times, reflex paraplegia ensued without fits during dentition. These forms of disease were very commonly met with, especially in hospital practice, in children from six months to two years of age. The great point was to prevent these seizures by relieving the irritation of dentition by timely scarification of the gums and attention to the secretions.

Dr. GIBB was reminded of an instance that came under his observation some years ago, but which perhaps hardly came within the same category as those described by the author of the paper. After a lingering labour, a child was born with spastic rigidity of all the muscles on one side of the body; in fact, it was an instance of congenital hemiplegia. Suspecting that the cause existed in the brain, he was allowed to make an examination of the body of the infant, and found a clot in the substance of the brain on the side opposite to that in which the hemiplegia existed. The vessels generally were very much congested about the head, and no doubt, had the child lived, it would have remained palsied. The case was recorded at the time in the *Lancet*, Nov. 13th, 1858.

Dr. LITTLE quite agreed with the President that the majority of infantile spastic and paralytic contractions arose between the ages of six months and two years from cerebro-spinal disorders; and that, perhaps, for one that depended on abnormal or premature labour, there were twenty or more from other causes incidental to later life. Not having found any reference to the affections consequent on abnormal and premature parturition in the works of English medical writers, he had referred, with some confidence, to Shakespeare, to ascertain whether any notions on the subject were contained in his works. The description of the physical character of Richard III was exactly that of an individual afflicted with one kind of deformity originating at birth.* He was convinced Shakespeare had drawn the picture from such an individual. He was probably aware of the fact mentioned by Sir Thomas More, that "the Duchess of Glo'ster had much ado in her travail, he (Richard III) being born the feet forward."

- * "I that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them."

In the following lines, Shakespeare has used more poetic licence. The great dramatist has here probably intensified some popular notions on the subject—

- "If ever he have child, abortive be it;
Prodigious and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;
And that be heir to his unhappiness."

A FAT BOY. The Aldinga, which arrived from Melbourne on Sunday, brings us a somewhat extraordinary visitor, no less than the celebrated Fat Boy, the wonder of Australasia. This remarkable prodigy is named William Abernethy, and is a native of Sydney. He is now 12 years and 4 months of age, and weighs no less than twenty-one stone. The place of the nativity of this wonderful youth was Brisbane, New South Wales, where his parents resided in a humble sphere of life until raised to wealth through the agency of this extraordinary child. (*South Australian Journal*.)

Correspondence.

HYDROPATHY AND HOMŒOPATHY AT MALVERN.

LETTER FROM SPENCER WELLS, ESQ.

SIR,—In a letter from Dr. Grindrod of Malvern, published in your number of this day, this hydropathic physician complains that the late Mr. Booth Eddison, Mr. Vallance of Brighton, Dr. Robert Lee, Dr. Sutherland, and other "distinguished metropolitan and provincial physicians and surgeons", send patients to Dr. Gully, while "the legitimate members of the profession" have "largely impeded my (Dr. Grindrod's) success by their special recommendations of the hydro-homœopathic practitioners".

Among other special instances cited by Dr. Grindrod is the following:—"I heard of Mr. Spencer Wells being at one time in Dr. Gully's establishment, and subsequently under his care as an out-patient". I must therefore request you to allow me to offer a short reply.

Early in 1851, I suffered from a severe attack of pleuro-pneumonia on the right side. I was attended by three kind friends, eminent metropolitan physicians, still alive. I was cupped and blistered, lived in an equable temperature, and took all that was prescribed for me. But after some weeks, finding that I did not improve, two of my friends advised me to go to Dr. Gully's establishment at Malvern. The third—a distinguished "chest-man"—said that no air entered the right lung below the second rib; that the lung was filled with "low aplastic exudation"; and that it did not much matter what I did. I might please myself. So I went to Malvern; was told by Dr. Gully to live in the open air; to eat nothing but bread and lean meat; to drink nothing but water; to avoid all wine, beer, spirits, tea, coffee, and tobacco; and to be well rubbed thrice a day by a bath-man with wet towels till the skin was in a glow. After a time, I had an occasional hot-air bath, and latterly cold douches. In six weeks I left, nearly well. I was able to walk to the top of the Malvern Hills, and one day rode on horseback to Cheltenham and back. In July or August in the same year I had a relapse, and again went to Malvern. I remained a short time as an "out-patient" under Dr. Gully; but he advised me to go to the Highlands. I did so, got quite well, and have never had a day's illness since, except from two dissection-wounds.

I need not say that this practical test of the value of the Malvern treatment led me to recommend it to many patients; and I naturally sent them to Dr. Gully. In 1853 I published a little book on *Gout*, and I devoted an entire chapter to the "Cold-Water Cure", especially pointing out the cases in which it is beneficial, those in which it is injurious or dangerous; how it is pursued at a bathing establishment; and how similar advantages may be obtained at the home of the patient, "with more safety, under the direction of his usual medical attendant". I have just looked over this chapter again; and I may add, that a further experience of eight years fully confirms me in the opinion I there expressed as to the good effect of hydropathic treatment, combined with "pure air, cheerful society, and absence from all domestic troubles, cares, or anxieties." What I practise I have openly professed and urged upon others; but I deny that, by recommending hydropathy, I have in any way supported homœopathy. On the contrary, I have never lost an opportunity of exposing the absurdity of the doctrines of Hahnemann, and the danger and folly of trusting to infinitesimal doses in any disease requiring any medical treatment at all. I have never once "met in consultation", nor "attended a patient with",

any homœopathic practitioner. I have frequently been asked to do so, but I have always replied, "We have nothing in common. I have no faith in his doctrines. His globules are nothing but sugar. He will not allow what I think necessary; so it is quite useless for us to meet." More than once I have been asked to attend a case as a surgeon only, and leave the medical treatment to a homœopath. I have always refused to do this. Only a few months ago, I was asked if I would operate on a mother and daughter, both suffering from ovarian disease; and leave the general treatment to a homœopath. Of course I refused; and I know that on this and other occasions I have suffered considerable pecuniary loss because I would not act in a manner which I conscientiously believed might seriously injure the patients who would have been confided to my care.

Now Dr. Grindrod does not expressly state, but he implies, that he is a pure hydropathic practitioner, and that Dr. Gully is a "hydro-homœopath"; consequently, that I and others who send patients to Dr. Gully are supporting homœopathy. Allow me also on this point to say a few words.

I have known Dr. Gully for many years. He is an M.D. of Edinburgh, a Licentiate of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, a Fellow of our Medico-Chirurgical Society. I find by the *Medical Directory* that he translated and edited Tiedemann's *Human Physiology* and Broussais' *General Pathology*; and that he is the author of works on *Neurology*, the *Simple Treatment of Disease*, and the *Water-Cure in Chronic Disease*. Not a word as to homœopathy. I have sent many patients to Dr. Gully, and I have seen many others who had been at Malvern; I have consulted with Dr. Gully about such patients by letter; and I never once heard an allusion made to homœopathic treatment. On one occasion only did homœopathy become the subject of conversation between us; and Dr. Gully then expressed opinions in which I fully concur, and in which I believe you, sir, and most of us, would concur; namely, that though infinitesimal doses are nothing, yet that aconite, belladonna, strychnia, and various other powerful remedies, may be given with good effect in much smaller doses than those usually prescribed. I therefore shall continue to regard Dr. Gully, as I always have regarded him, as an accomplished physician, who practises hydropathy with great skill and ability in suitable cases, and who regards homœopathy very much as the rest of us do.

Now, as to Dr. Grindrod, I made his acquaintance when I was at Malvern. I attended one or two popular lectures which he delivered; and I had two or three conversations with him and with some of his patients. I left Malvern with the distinct impression that he both believed in and practised homœopathy. So strong was this impression, that when the Edinburgh College of Physicians began to sell their license for ten pounds to anybody who could procure a decent testimonial from two medical men, and Dr. Grindrod wrote to me to ask me to fill up his certificate, I wrote in reply, that our acquaintance had been very slight, but I had an impression that he was given to homœopathic practice, and therefore I could not comply with his request. I offered to reconsider this decision if he could satisfy me on this point. I forget the exact terms of the reply, but I know that Dr. Grindrod did not satisfy me. I did not fill up his certificate; and, until I receive a more distinct assurance than any contained in his letter of last week, I shall continue to regard him as a "hydro-homœopath".

I am, etc., T. SPENCER WELLS, F.R.C.S.

3, Upper Grosvenor Street, Oct. 12th, 1861.

[We have much pleasure in publishing Mr. Spencer Wells's letter, and sincerely trust that Dr. Grindrod may have been mistaken in the particular case to which Mr. Wells alludes. We have never yet heard

of a single instance of an "accomplished physician" figuring as a homœopath in England, and should deeply regret to find such a thing at length possible. We are satisfied, however, that Mr. Wells will now make himself master of the certainty of the case. All we can say is, that the facts stated some weeks ago in a leading article in this JOURNAL have never been contradicted; and we can assure our readers that they were not inserted without proper investigation as to their correctness. As to Dr. Grindrod's having had dealings with homœopathy, this we take to be upon the face of it a thing impossible; and we have no doubt that Dr. Grindrod will himself give Mr. Wells satisfaction on this point. At all events, surely there ought to be no difficulty in getting at the fact as to who does and who does not practise homœopathy at Malvern. We shall see. EDITOR.]

COLORATION OF THE FÆCES.

LETTER FROM T. POPE, ESQ.

SIR,—*"Qui caput, ille facit."* As in the clerical so in the medical profession, how laudable is orthodoxy! To show the absurdity of the colon causing brown fæces, let the ductus communis choledochus be totally occluded, so that not one iota of bile can enter the duodenum, notwithstanding inhalation and exhalation and the contiguity of the colon and liver; let ever so much mercury be administered; and we should never see brownish, but whitish, fæces, and the urine loaded with blackish or yellowish bile. To be as brief as possible, I will conclude with, God help the patient with congested liver, who is under the care of a medical man who ignores mercury, and attributes to the colon the hepatic function!

I am, etc.,

THOMAS POPE.

Cleobury Mortimer, Salop, October 16, 1861.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT OF NOSTRUMS.

LETTER FROM W. H. RAMSDEN, L.R.C.P.E.

SIR,—In writing the letter which appeared in your JOURNAL of the 14th Sept. (and not the 7th, as stated by Mr. Sellers), having reference to the notorious Griffiths Jones and his "Astra Mankaz," I was actuated by no motive but one; and that was, to call the attention of the profession to the way in which the various empirical panaceas are brought before the attention of the public, feeling thoroughly convinced that a great evil is done by members of our own profession giving them their sanction.

The supposition of Mr. Sellers that the object of my letter "was mainly intended to ridicule him," is both untrue and ungenerous. Nay, more, it is absurd to suppose that any man can be ridiculed whose name is neither mentioned nor insinuated.

I do not see that it was a very "wonderful performance" on my part, to convince the parents that Mr. Sellers knew nothing about the food, after having read the account which appeared in the newspapers; for we find that the proprietor's knowledge even of its cognomen was absolutely nothing.

In my letter I find that I have committed an unintentional error, by saying that the food had been supplied by the gentleman in attendance. I am glad it was not, and express my regret that in this respect I must have been mistaken.

I was, however, most certainly given to understand that the food would not be continued. I am sorry to say that it has. Mr. B. (the father of the child) did not say "that as the food agreed well with the child, they should continue to use it"; and he informs me that he did not say to Mr. Sellers that he told me so. What he did say was this: "Whatever the food may be it suits the child."